

BAD AIR PICTURED AS CANCER CAUSE

Schepers Says Pollution
May Be More to Blame
Than Cigarettes

By FRED HIXSON

Air pollution may be more to blame for lung cancer than cigarette smoking, according to a leading pathologist appearing on a symposium program here Monday.

Declaring that "there are epidemiological correlations between the prevalence of lung cancer and specific air pollution situations," Dr. G. W. H. Schepers told the first annual Symposium on Chronic Pulmonary Diseases at Lakeshore Lodge that "chemicals are coming into our environment that can produce the tumors."

Dr. Schepers, pathologist for E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., was one of three specialists who read papers at the symposium held under the auspices of Chattanooga and Hamilton Medical Society, Chattanooga Area Academy of General Practice and the Hamilton County Tuberculosis Association.

The symposium opened Monday afternoon and will close at noon today.

Professor in Texas

Appearing with Dr. Schepers were Dr. John Stewart Chapman, professor of medicine and assistant dean of postgraduate education at University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, and Dr. Felix A. Hughes, chief of thoracic surgery at the Veterans Administration Hospital at Memphis and assistant professor of surgery at the University of Tennessee Medical School.

The Du Pont pathologist, touching upon the question of air pollution, chronic bronchitis and emphysema, said:

"Not only are bronchitis and emphysema likely to be fostered by air pollution, but also lung cancer. Many people have tried to link lung cancer with cigarettes. I am not saying there is not a link between cigarette smoking and cancer, but I do say that cigarettes are not the sole cause."

"There are chemicals coming into our environment that can be shown in the laboratory to produce tumors. Among such chemicals are beryllium compounds, certain types of asbestos, soot and others."

Dr. Schepers also discussed the relation between lung changes which can be attributed to air pollution, whether inside a factory or outside it, and heart disease. He showed the results of experiments with rabbits exposed to small particles of dust. These animals, he said, which breathed particles of dust developed increased blood pressures in proportion to the length and severity of their exposure. He added that "one has to speculate whether this is caused physiologically at the heart level, or due to the remote effect of inhaled substances on the other organs, for instance the kidneys."

Dr. Chapman discussed "Treatment of Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema." The Texas specialist said there is no cure for emphysema. He described this disease of the lungs as one which leaves the tissues "in about the same condition as a girdle which had been through the washing machine too many times." The lung tissue, he explained, loses its elasticity.

Dr. Chapman gave a rather grim report on emphysema. The medical profession, he said, has not really discovered its cause.

"I believe it is a degenerative disease," the specialist declared. "It is a part of the aging process. We do not know how to cure it. But we know how to control it."

If a patient observes the limitations the disease imposes, Dr. Chapman said, he or she should get along all right. But if the patient oversteps the limitations, trouble is ahead.

"So, I would say, the patient must learn to live with the limitations this disease imposes," Dr. Chapman admonished.

Mayor Ralph Kelley gave the address of welcome. J. Thomas Mann, president of the Hamilton County Tuberculosis Association, opened the meeting at a luncheon. Dr. Spiros Whitaker, thoracic surgeon, is chairman of the symposium committee.

Dr. Paul V. Nolan introduced Dr. Schepers. Dr. David P. McCallie was moderator at a roundtable discussion in which Dr. Schepers, Dr. Chapman and Dr. Hughes participated.

Today's session will open at 1:30 a.m. with Dr. Chapman discussing "Present Day Chemotherapy in Tuberculosis." Dr. Schepers will discuss "Silico Tuberculosis." A roundtable discussion of tuberculosis following a coffee break will end the symposium.

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